

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 044011 TOSEC 040253

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 044011 TOSEC 040253

NODIS

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM RABAT DATED FEBRUARY 24, 1976 SENT
SECSTATE WASHDC IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

S E C R E T RABAT 1031

NODIS

DEPARTMENT/NEA FOR ASST SECY ATHERTON

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SS, MO

SUBJECT: ATHERTON VISIT TO MOROCCO AND ALGERIA

REF: (A) SECTO 4128, (B) SECTO 4129

1. IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIPT REFTEL (A) EVENING FEB 23, I
CONTACTED ACTING FONMIN MOHAMED BENHIMA, WHO AGREED TO RECEIVE
ME FIRST THING IN MORNING TO DISCUSS DETAILS OF ATHERTON VISIT.
DURING OUR MORNING SESSION, I PRESENTED DETAILED EXPLANATION
OF PURPOSE OF VISIT PREVIOUSLY AS SET FORTH IN REFTELS. BENHIMA PRO-
MISED TO CONTACT KING IN FEZ IMMEDIATELY AND TO BE BACK IN
TOUCH WITH ME AS SOON AS KING'S DECISION KNOWN.

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2. BEHIMA COMMENTED ON PERSONAL BASIS THAT WHATEVER THE OFFICIAL EXPLANATION FOR ATHERTON VISIT MIGHT BE, "ANY CHILD" WOULD DRAW CONCLUSION THAT ATHERTON UNDERTAKING MEDIATION EFFORT. HE ALSO EXPRESSED PERSONAL VIEW THAT TIMING "EITHER TOO SOON OR TOO LATE," AND THAT NET RESULT OF VISIT MIGHT BE TO MAKE ALGERIANS MORE DIFFICULT FOR MOROCCANS TO DEAL WITH. BENHIMA AT SAME TIME STRESSED THAT HE APPRECIATED THE SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING ATHERTON TRAVEL. KING WOULD DECIDE, HE CONCLUDED.

3. FYI. MEANWHILE, ARAB LEAGUE SECY GEN MAHMOUD RIAD STILL IN FEZ IN CONNECTION WITH MEDIATION EFFORT AS OF MORNING FEB 24. KING TODAY WILL ALSO BE HEARING DETAILS OF MOSCOW VISIT OF PRIMIN OSMAN, WHO RETURNED EVENING FEB 23.
NEUMANN
UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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